

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 10171

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MPOL, MILI, PFOR, SOPN, TH

SUBJ: MEETING OF U.S.-THAI COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON FORCE
REDUCTION

REFS: A. BANGKOK 9678; B. BANGKOK 10082

SUMMARY: THE U.S.-THAI COORDINATING COMMITTEE MET ON JUNE 2
TO DISCUSS THE 7500-SPACE REDUCTION IN U.S. FORCES THAILAND
TO BE MADE BY ABOUT JUNE 30. THE COMMITTEE AGREED ON THE
TEXT OF A PRESS RELEASE ANNOUNCING THE FIRST INCREMENT OF
THIS REDUCTION (REF B). THE THAI DELEGATION DISCLOSED THE
FORMATION OF A NEW INTER-AGENCY RTG COMMITTEE TO DEAL
WITH THE IMPLICATIONS OF U.S. DRAWDOWNS AND BASE CLOSURES,
AND SOUGHT DETAILED AND COMPLETE U.S. WITHDRAWAL PLANS
NEEDED BY THIS NEW COMMITTEE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE U.S.-THAI COORDINATING COMMITTEE MET AT THAI SUPREME
COMMAND HEADQUARTERS JUNE 2 TO DISCUSS THE REDUCTION OF
7500 AUTHORIZED U.S. MILITARY SPACES BY ABOUT JUNE 30,
1975, WHICH HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED ON MAY 5 BY THE RTG AND
THE USG. THE THAI DELEGATION WAS HEADED BY CHIEF OF
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STAFF, SUPREME COMMAND, GENERAL KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN AND

INCLUDED KRIANGSAK'S DEPUTY, GENERAL CHAROEN PONGPANICH, OTHER MILITARY STAFF AND MR. VORAPUT CHAYANAN, CHIEF, AMERICAN DIVISION, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THE U.S. SIDE WAS CHAIRED BY COMUSMACHTAI BRIGADIER GENERAL HARRY C. ADERHOLT AND INCLUDED THE EMBASSY'S POLITICAL-MILITARY COUNSELOR AND OTHER MACTHAI AND EMBASSY STAFF.

2. KRIANGSAK OPENED THE DISCUSSION BY REFERRING TO A LETTER SENT BY HIM ON MAY 28 TO GENERAL ADERHOLT. THE LETTER HAD SET FORTH KRIANGSAK'S CONCEPT OF HOW THE U.S. WITHDRAWAL SHOULD TAKE PLACE. ACCORDING TO THIS CONCEPT, THE B-52'S SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN FIRST, FOLLOWED BY WITHDRAWAL OF TACTICAL AIRCRAFT AND THEN CLOSURE OF BASES. KRIANGSAK ASKED THE U.S. SIDE TO PRESENT ITS SCENARIO FOR ACCOMPLISHING THIS PLAN.

3. THE U.S. SIDE REPLIED THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE JUNE 2 MEETING WAS TO DISCUSS THE SPECIFICS OF THE FIRST INCREMENT OF THE CURRENT 7500-SPACE DRAWDOWN; THE U.S. WAS NOT PREPARED TO PRESENT COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL PLANS AT THE MEETING.

4. KRIANGSAK NOTED THAT A NEW INTER-AGENCY RTG COMMITTEE HAD BEEN FORMED, CHAIRED BY FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI CHUNHAWAN AND WITH KRIANGSAK HIMSELF AS DEPUTY CHAIRMAN. THIS COMMITTEE WAS TO DEAL WITH ALL ASPECTS OF U.S. WITHDRAWAL, AND OBVIOUSLY COULD NOT FUNCTION IN THE ABSENCE OF KNOWLEDGE OF U.S. PLANS. MFA'S VORAPUT CHAYANAN FURTHER ELUCIDATED THE FUNCTIONS OF THE NEW COMMITTEE. HE SAID IT WAS CHARGED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EXAMINING AT THE HIGH POLICY LEVEL SUCH QUESTIONS AS THAI TAKEOVER OF BASES, ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CLOSURE IN AREAS SURROUNDING BASES, AND LABOR PROBLEMS ARISING FROM BASE CLOSURES. HE AND KRIANGSAK REITERATED THAT THE COMMITTEE COULD NOT FUNCTION WITHOUT A DETAILED AND COMPREHENSIVE U.S. TIMETABLE.

5. KRIANGSAK AND VORAPUT APPEARED UNCERTAIN AS TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NEW COMMITTEE AND THE THAI-U.S. CONFIDENTIAL

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COORDINATING COMMITTEE. INITIALLY, THEY EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THE NEW COMMITTEE WOULD SUPPLANT THE THAI-U.S. COMMITTEE, BUT WHEN IT WAS POINTED OUT TO THEM THAT THE NEW COMMITTEE WAS SOLELY THAI IN COMPOSITION, THEY CONCLUDED THAT THERE WAS NEED FOR THE THAI-U.S. COORDINATING COMMITTEE TO SERVE AS A FORUM FOR THAI-U.S. CONSULTATIONS ON U.S. DRAWDOWNS.

6. ACCEPTING THE FACT THAT U.S. DELEGATION WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO PRESENT A COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL PACKAGE, KRIANGSAK THEN SOUGHT TO ELICIT FULL DETAILS ON THE 7500-SPACE DRAWDOWN. THE U.S. DELEGATION CONTINUED TO POINT OUT THAT IT WAS PREPARED TO DISCUSS ONLY THE FIRST INCREMENT, I.E., WITHDRAWAL OF B-52'S AND F-111'S AND CLOSURE OF UBON. THE U.S. DELEGATION UNDERTOOK TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL DETAILS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. WE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE PHRASE, "ABOUT JUNE 30", AS THE 7500-SPACE DRAWDOWN TARGET, REPRESENTED A COMPROMISE BETWEEN THE ORIGINAL U.S. COMMITMENT TO COMPLETE THE DRAWDOWN DURING THE SUMMER AND THAI INSISTENCE ON FIXING THE DATE AT JUNE 30. IT WAS THEREFORE POSSIBLE THAT THE FULL 7500-SPACE DRAWDOWN MIGHT NOT BE COMPLETED BY JUNE 30, ALTHOUGH THE U.S. WOULD SEEK TO COME AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO THAT DATE.

7. DURING THE COURSE OF THE MEETING, KRIANGSAK REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO THE DESIRABILITY OF EARLY CLOSURE OF THE US FACILITY AT UDORN AIR BASE. HE ATTRIBUTED THIS DESIRE TO UDORN'S VULNERABILITY. (COMMENT: SINCE NKP IS CONSIDERABLY MORE VULNERABLE THAN UDORN TO COMMUNIST TERRORIST ATTACK, WE ASSUME KRIANGSAK WAS REFERRING TO UDORN'S VULNERABILITY TO LEFTIST AGITATORS AND PROVOCATEURS WISHING TO CREATE INCIDENTS.)

8. REQUEST EARLIEST POSSIBLE DETAILS ON REMAINDER OF 7500-SPACE DRAWDOWN FOR DISCUSSION WITH THAI. (OUR IDEAS ON COMPREHENSIVE U.S. DRAWDOWN PLAN FOLLOW SEPTTEL AS PROMISTED REF A.)
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